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Remarks on specimens, holotype, description and subspecies of *Chlorophonia flavirostris* Schläter

by J. Ingels

Received 22 January 1979

The genus *Chlorophonia* consists of 4 species of small, sexually dimorphic tanagers. However, sexes should be alike, or nearly so, in the juvenal and first basic (sub-adult) plumages for all 4 species (Skutch 1954).

C. flavirostris, confined to the Colombian-Pacific region (Meyer de Schauensee, pers. comm.), was first described by Schläter (1861, 1886), but little has been published since (Gyldenstolpe 1941, Blake 1959, Hilty 1977). These notes based mainly upon the existing study material, add substantial information to the general knowledge of this tanager.

Specimens

I have been able to locate 19 mounted birds and study skins of *C. flavirostris*; 5 are housed in a private collection and 14 in public or scientific institutions. Exact collecting locality data are known for 6 skins only.

In the following list, for specimens collected in the wild, data, as far as available, are given in the following order: institution which cares for the skin, collection number, sex, author (if any) who first recorded the skin, locality and year of collection and the collector.

England: British Museum (Natural History) (BMNH), Tring: 1885.6.12.23, ♀ (?), holotype, described by Schläter (1861), collected in Ecuador. Schläter's guess that the type came from the eastern slope of the Andes is probably in error, since all specimens with locality data are from the western slope (Storer in Peters 1970); 1925.12.24.615, ♀, collected at Mindo, W. Ecuador, in January 1914 by W. Goodfellow.

Sweden: Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet, Stockholm (NHRS): 1919.08.20.3001, ♀, mentioned by Gyldenstolpe (1914), collected below Gualea, W. Ecuador, 20 August 1919 by L. Söderström.

United States: Chicago Natural History Museum (CNHM), Chicago: 251021, ♀, described as a subspecies *C. f. minima* by Blake (1959), collected near La Guayacana, Nariño, S. Colombia, 20 February 1958 by K. von Schneidern; Louisiana State University Museum of Zoology (LSUMZ), Baton Rouge: 60801, immature ♂, taken at Alto Yunda near La Cascada (Anchicaya Valley), Valle, S. Colombia, 11 June 1975 by S. L. Hilty; Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia (PANS): 173498, ♀; 173499, ♂, both collected 27 May 1973 and 173500, immature ♂, collected 21 May 1973; all collected near the same locality as the LSUMZ specimen, by S. L. Hilty. The LSUMZ and PANS specimens have been recorded by the collector (Hilty 1977).

Denmark: an unsexed specimen acquired in 1909 by the Universitets Zoologisk Museum, Copenhagen, has disappeared from the museum's systematic collection (Fjeldså pers. comm.). R. W. Storer (pers. comm.) called my attention to this skin, which he saw when preparing the section on tanagers in Peters (1970).

The skins of 5 ♂♂, 1 ♀, 2 imm ♂♂ and 2 unsexed specimens, which had been imported alive into the United States and Denmark for zoological or private collections and which were preserved after death, are listed below. Data are given in the following order: country of importation, sex, previous zoological or private collection where the birds were exhibited alive and present owner of the skins.

Denmark: 3 ♂♂, and 1 imm ♂ and 1 ♀ (latter 2 both mounted), live birds originating from Ecuador, previously in the private collections of E. Nørgaard-Olesen and S. Carstensen; skins now under care of the former.

United States: 2 ♂♂, 1 imm ♂ and 2 unsexed specimens, all imported from Ecuador and added to the collections of the Boehm Aviaries, and the New York and Cleveland zoos, in the early 60's; skins are now in the American Museum of Natural History, New York: 781690, ♂; 648896, imm ♂; 701828 and 763838, both unsexed; 768814, ♂. Conway (1962) described 701828 when alive as a subspecies *C. f. boehmi*.

I believe all specimens now in existence are included in the lists mentioned, but I would appreciate hearing of any additional skins of *C. flavirostris*.

The holotype was described by Sclater (1861) as: "It appears to be the female of some undescribed species of this group" (he meant the genus *Chlorophonia*) and (1886) "The type specimen, which is at present unique, is probably a female". Recently, I examined this skin (BMNH 1885.6.12.23), and compared it with the sexed skins in Nørgaard-Olesen's private collection and the other BMNH and NHRS female skins. Without doubt, it is a ♂ in immature plumage and not a ♀. It has the upper breast bright grass-green, typical of immature males. Colour description of adult and immature males and females to support this statement, are given hereafter.

Colour descriptions

The following corroboratory colour descriptions of adult and immature males and females were made after examining the BMNH and NHRS skins and the live birds owned by Nørgaard-Olesen (prior to their first moult under captive conditions). Colours of soft parts were compared with the notes on the collector's label of all specimens taken in the wild.

Adult ♂♂: mainly bright grass-green; upper back crossed by a golden-yellow collar, broader in the centre; centre of breast and belly golden-yellow; golden-yellow under parts and grass-green upper breast separated by narrow chestnut band (narrower or broken in the middle so that only chestnut patches remain at each side of the breast); upper and under tail coverts golden-yellow; narrow eye-ring golden-yellow; wing and tail feathers black, edged with grass-green; under wing coverts and inner web of primaries white.

Eye white with a dark iris (Meyer de Schauensee's statement (1970) "iris white" is an error). Bill and feet bright orange to orange red; feet tend to be paler, more yellowish than bill, which usually is somewhat darker towards the tip of the upper mandible (cf. colour plate in Scamell 1969).

Adult ♀♀: grass-green not so bright as adult ♂♂, and with somewhat paler yellow under parts; wings and tail black edged with grass-green; centre of belly and vent pale yellow; yellow eye-ring not so prominent as in ♂♂. An ill-defined area on the chin faintly yellow; ♂♂ lack this yellowish chin. This area is not a "slight chin-spot" (Sclater 1886), that is to say it is not a well-defined area with a strikingly different colour compared to the surrounding area.

Eye, as ♂. Bill and feet somewhat paler than in ♂♂, rather pinkish yellow to orange (cf. colour plate in Sclater 1886). A colour plate of an adult pair of *C. flavirostris* has been published by Nørgaard-Olesen (1973).

Immature ♂♂: resemble adult ♀♀, except for the brighter grass-green upper breast and the greener chin. Eye-ring as adult ♂♂.

Immature ♀♀: have never been recorded or described, but could possibly resemble less brightly coloured adult ♀♀.

In live birds, the colour of bill, legs and feet is rather variable. It seems plausible that in the wild, a certain diversity in the colour of soft parts may occur, depending upon availability of colouring agents provided by natural food. Differences in the colours of soft parts between male and female have been reported (Everitt 1973), but are not uniform; individual variations within males and females may overlap variations between both sexes.

Subspecies

C. f. minima has been described by Blake (1959) from the skin of an adult

♀ (CNHM 251021) which was compared with the description of the holotype (Sclater 1861, 1886), then believed to be a ♀ (now known to be an immature ♂). The distinction between *minima* and the nominate form is based upon the differences in bill and feet colour, in wing and tail length and in chin colour. Blake (1959) used the notes on the label made by K. von Schneidern at the time of collection to describe the colour of bill and feet of *minima* as reddish brown and reddish yellow, respectively; and he wrote: "The reddish yellow feet have faded to dull yellowish in the skin" (Blake 1959). Sclater (1861) described the holotype without having seen the freshly collected skin and without any information from a collector's label. He described the feet as yellow and the bill as yellow, namely the colour these soft parts have at the present day in a faded skin, rather than the true colours in life.

Blake (1959) gives the following measurements for *minima*: wing 56 mm, tail 26 mm. I measured the 3 skins of ♀♀ in European collections, and I found that wing and tail lengths of all 3 fall within the range: wing 54.5–56.5 mm, tail 23.5–25.5 mm. However wing and tail lengths of the 3 ♂♂ in Nørgaard-Olesen's collection fall within the following range: wing 55.8–57.2 mm, tail 26.4–28.0 mm. In view of this variability in wing and tail lengths of female (and male) skins, Blake's description "Similar to the nominate race . . . but decidedly smaller" (wherefore he named the subspecies *minima*) is disputable. It is more probable that in general females are slightly smaller than males.

The colour of the chin area is the strongest argument against differentiation into two subspecies. The holotype being an immature male, has no obvious pale yellowish chin. In referring to Sclater's description (1881), Blake (1959) used the expression "the small, bright yellow throat-spot", which is a misquotation of Sclater's description "slight chin-spot pale yellow", probably due to the fact that Blake did not see the holotype himself (he declares: "I have not seen this bird"—Blake 1959). However, Blake's description of the CNHM female skin, which he named *C. f. minima*, agrees completely with the NHRS and BMNH female skins. Blake (1959) did not, in fact, refer to the NHRS skin, although it had already been mentioned by Gyldenstolpe (1941). Since Blake (1959), *C. f. minima* has been used by Hilty (1977), though without justification, to identify specimens collected in the northern part of the species' distribution range in Colombia.

When, in 1962, Conway wrote a paper "After 101 years—a Yellow-billed Chlorophonia", he was obviously unaware of the existence of the NHRS, BMNH and CNHM skins. The 2 *C. flavirostris* described in Conway's paper were exhibited by the New York Zoological Society, and were 2 of the *C. flavirostris* imported from Ecuador by E. M. Boehm for the E. M. Boehm Aviaries. Unfortunately, Everitt (1973) transposed sexes when describing and comparing colour patterns of adult ♂ and ♀ in Boehm's own collection. Conway completes a description of one of Boehm's ♂♂ with the words: "It is barely possible that this bird is a new form (*C. f. boehmi*, of course! (*sic*)). It appears larger than our specimen" (he means, the ♂ in the New York Zoological Society's collection). Later, E. M. Boehm donated this particular ♂, together with a smaller one, to the Cleveland zoo and its skin was deposited in the American Museum of Natural History after death (AMNH 701828). Although this skin was labelled 'unsexed', it must be that larger male mentioned by Conway (1962). The new subspecies *boehmi* was evidently based

upon this one ♂ *C. flavirostris* with unusually large measurements: wing 62 mm, tail 33 mm (J. Bull, pers. comm.). However, no detailed description and measurements were given by Conway (1962) and there is no additional museum material to support the validity of this new subspecies.

No justification for subdividing of *C. flavirostris* can be found in the small individual variations within the very limited known material, and the number of skins collected for which exact locality data are given is too small to prove the existence of subspecific isolated populations. Although both 'subspecies' are mentioned by Storer (*in* Peters 1970), he does not subdivide the species. The details given above, support this view.

Acknowledgements: For their help and comments in preparing this paper, I am indebted to D. W. Snow and I. C. J. Galbraith (British Museum, Natural History, Tring), J. Fjeldså (Universitets Zoologisk Museum, Copenhagen), E. Nørgaard-Olesen (Janderup, Denmark), B.-O. Stolt (Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet, Stockholm), J. Bull (American Museum of Natural History, New York), W. G. Conway and J. Bell (New York Zoological Society, New York), S. L. Hilty (University of Arizona, Tucson), R. M. de Schauensee and Mrs. M. F. Trout (Academy of Natural Sciences, Philadelphia), R. W. Storer (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor), G. H. Lowery Jr. (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge) and H.-G. Klös (Berlin, W. Germany).

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IN BRIEF

Alleged occurrence of *Rheinartia ocellata* in Sumatra

Dr. H. D. Rijksen conducted field work on the ecology of the orang utan *Pongo pygmaeus* in Sumatra from 1971 to 1974. His study area was in primary lowland rain forest at Ketambe, 32 km north of the township of Kutacane in Aceh Province at 3° 40' N, 97° 30' E, lying within the Gunung Leuser Reserve. While there he compiled a list of the birds and mammals present in his study area, which included the pheasant *Rheinartia ocellata* (Rijksen 1978). This species has not been recorded from Sumatra before.

In correspondence Dr. Rijksen wrote that he had "not found any hard evidence of the occurrence [of *R. ocellata*] but once glimpsed an animal which strongly resembled some plates in books depicting this species". He heard calls from this bird which were higher pitched than those of *Argusianus argus* but otherwise similar.